

פֿוֿרשװאָרד

SHA'AR ZAHAV

שַׁעַר זָהָב

תמוז 5739 JULY 1979

off the eastern wall

It's actually been two years since I led our first services on July 8, 1977 at Glide Memorial Methodist Church in the Tenderloin (not even the Tenderloin Heights). We have sure come a long way since then.

In a physical sense we progressed to a gay community center (which became a dance studio), a Buddhist monastery (where we were too exuberant), a mental health center (where it was sometimes difficult to differentiate between the residents and our congregants) and the Norwegian-American Dovre Hall (which is now San Francisco's Women's Center)- until our arrival at our present location, the San Francisco Jewish Community Center, our first Jewish locale as well as one in which we will be able to stay until we acquire a permanent home.

In an organizational sense, we have also been through a lot. (A while ago I was describing some of our problems to a Jewish community leader and opined that perhaps as a predominantly gay congregation we had more than our share. He assured me he knew of no synagogue that didn't have growing pains of one variety or another.) There was a period of organizational formlessness, followed by our first attempt to establish a congregational structure. Many of you may remember the heated meetings we had at 32 Page which led to our present system. (As I mentioned last month, I feel the time has come to learn from our experience with our present structure and to modify our by-laws in a way that would be more appropriate for our current needs).

-CONT.

We have gone through many changes in terms of who has been active in the Congregation. Until last Spring, Sha'ar Zahav's leadership involved both women and men; in recent months very few women have been involved on our activities. I hope that, in the future, we can prove to be a place equally "hospitable" to both men and women.

I frequently feel that we "aren't doing enough" at Sha'ar Zahav, and yet over the last two years we have had major services (at the High Holidays and in memory of Harvey Milk), successful Sedarim, picnics, garage and "bagel" sales, in addition to our regular services and onegs. We did our part in the fight against Proposition 6 and we have made an impact on the establishment Jewish community. To a great extent because of the efforts of our Rabbi, Allen Bennett, we've become an integral part of San Francisco Jewry. This isn't to say we don't have lots of hard work ahead of us: the acquisitions and maintenance of a permanent home, the establishment of strong educational and social programs, the development of Sha'ar Zahav as a strong support group for our members.

There was a time, during the first months of our existence, when I wondered whether we would ever survive. I don't have those doubts now, but I do wonder where we are headed. We have never clearly established our congregational goals and priorities. Now that mere survival is no longer our concern, we should be giving individual and collective thought regarding the direction in which we would like Sha'ar Zahav to progress.

We have come a long way, but we still have a long way to go.

Daniel Chesir
Co-Leader

reminder

Just a reminder, if you have recently moved or, more importantly, are planning to move, please send a change of address card to our Congregation at P.O. Box 5640, San Francisco 94101 right away. Otherwise it costs us 25¢ to get your change of address from the Post Office.

It was with great joy that we dedicated our new ark on June first. Along with that we had the simha of dedicating our new yad (pointer) and a new kiddush cup. This all took place at the service which had been designated as one of rededication for our Torah scroll. As it turns out, we were able to give recognition to those who were either directly or indirectly responsible for our having obtained these various ritual items. For the benefit of those who were not able to be with us on that wonderful evening, we would like to again recognize those whose efforts made the acquisition and dedication of those things possible. The Torah, rescued from the Nazis, came to us from Westminster Synagogue in London, where it had been restored. It was obtained through the efforts of Rabbi Erwin Herman of Los Angeles, with a donation from an anonymous member of Sha'ar Zahav. The ark was "custom-made" by Ellis Jacobs and friends. But its existence, at least as an idea, goes back to last November when, at the service we held at which we recited kaddish for Harvey Milk, Carolyn Marks volunteered to help us build an ark, if we should ever get to that point. Shortly after that her husband, Senator Milton Marks, went to bat for us by arranging for Sinai Memorial Chapel to donate the funds necessary for the building of the ark. Today the ark is ours, thanks to all those whose time and effort made it possible. As for the yad, we have another interesting tale. It, too, came as an idea, several months ago, when Jarrow Rogovin, visiting us from L.A., asked if he might contribute something for the ritual objects of the Synagogue. Since we were arranging for the Torah rededication at that time, he gave a contribution towards a pointer which we would purchase, engraving it with an appropriate inscription. As it turned out, we never bought the pointer, since one is being donated to us by the Northern California Board of Rabbis. And until we get it, we have one on loan from Congregation Beth Sholom. In the meantime, we were collecting money from folks for this pointer, when the news of the donation came in, so we decided to divert the funds to the purchase of a Kiddush cup, which we were also able to dedicate on that exciting June first night. Our thanks go to Bob Ehrenberg, Tom Rothgiesser and Ellis Jacobs for their additional contributions for that as well.

from where i stand

There are certain moments in the life of a clergyperson which stand out as extra special. Certainly the events of this year's Gay Freedom Weekend are among them. And it is the whole idea of so many lesbians and gay men convening here in relative freedom, not to protest, but to celebrate, that has prompted the thoughts in this article.

Certainly it comes as no surprise that San Francisco is unique in its entire gay ambience. The remarkably vast numbers of areas of involvement in the life of the city, which we now seem to take for granted, are completely unthinkable in most other towns and cities. And as an example, the appearance of the Golden Gate Business Association's directory and the soon to be released Gay Area Telephone Directory are mind-boggling when we think of how many people are not only involved and listed in these compendia, but also listed with full names and telephone numbers. The various organizations which have sprung up to serve the community, including social service, business, medical, legal, religious, political, etc., have done something here in San Francisco which is even beyond the dreaming stage in most other places.

What is developing here is the consciousness that we can, in a great many cases, live our lives here with the same sorts of opportunities as our non-gay counterparts have everywhere else, i.e., a huge and visible "pool" of people from whom to choose social contacts, and a great variety of situations in which to meet them. We are no longer confined to dark corners, or places of which we were trained to be ashamed previously. For those who prefer certain sorts of social gathering places, those places exist, and there is no one to say that they are bad or good. They are simply there, and if we choose to go there, we take full responsibility for our choice. This could mean the Opera House as well as any S & M bar, and our freedom to frequent both is unmatched almost anywhere. Also, our political clout is growing daily, and while I am delighted to see it, I am concerned that our ability to organize and represent ourselves to take full advantage of that clout, has not fully developed yet.

I have to ask, not only for myself, but for Sha'ar Zahav as a congregation, what this means to and for us. At this point I see that while we are growing in acceptance and involvement within the greater community, we need to constantly remind ourselves that if we do not grow within ourselves individually,

and, in particular, spiritually, all the other growth will be sorely lacking in that one essential ingredient. I have to be honest enough to say that I sense a lack of spirituality in our worship together; we are reading words and singing songs, but I feel a lack of a worshipping kehilla when we get together on Friday nights. And I would very much want to see us begin to meet outside the regular Friday night services to engage in discussions (or call them classes, or rap groups) so that we can seriously address many of the issues which confront our congregation, but which we cannot really deal with in the Shabbat evening context. The world is very much with us; at this time, I would like to see us demonstrating our awareness of that by more actively involving ourselves as individuals and as a congregation in the ongoing affairs of our city. To get the strength to do that, we begin again each Shabbat in fellowship and worship. See you there!

Allen



jogging

The Sha'ar Zahav runners will meet

Sunday, July 15, 10:00 A.M. and

Sunday, July 29, 10:00 A.M. at the Boat House at Stow Lake, Golden Gate Park, San Francisco.

Participation has been increasing for each run and we hope you, too, decide to do something good for your body. Remember, jogging experience is not necessary and our run is open to all members, non-members, friends and family.

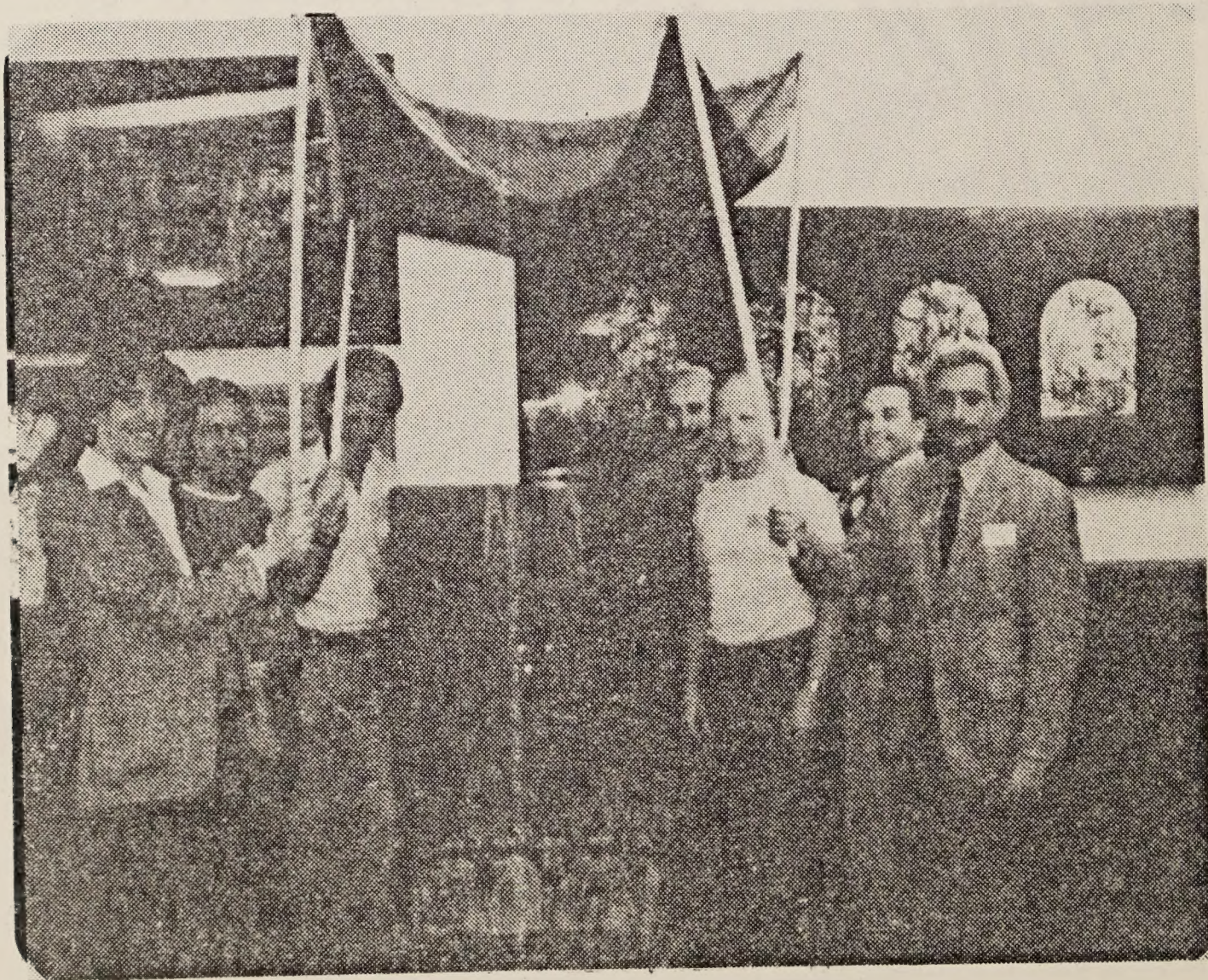
Call Ellis (552-6976) or Ron (552-6766) for directions to Stow Lake.

See you there.

Ellis Jacobs
Ron Lezell

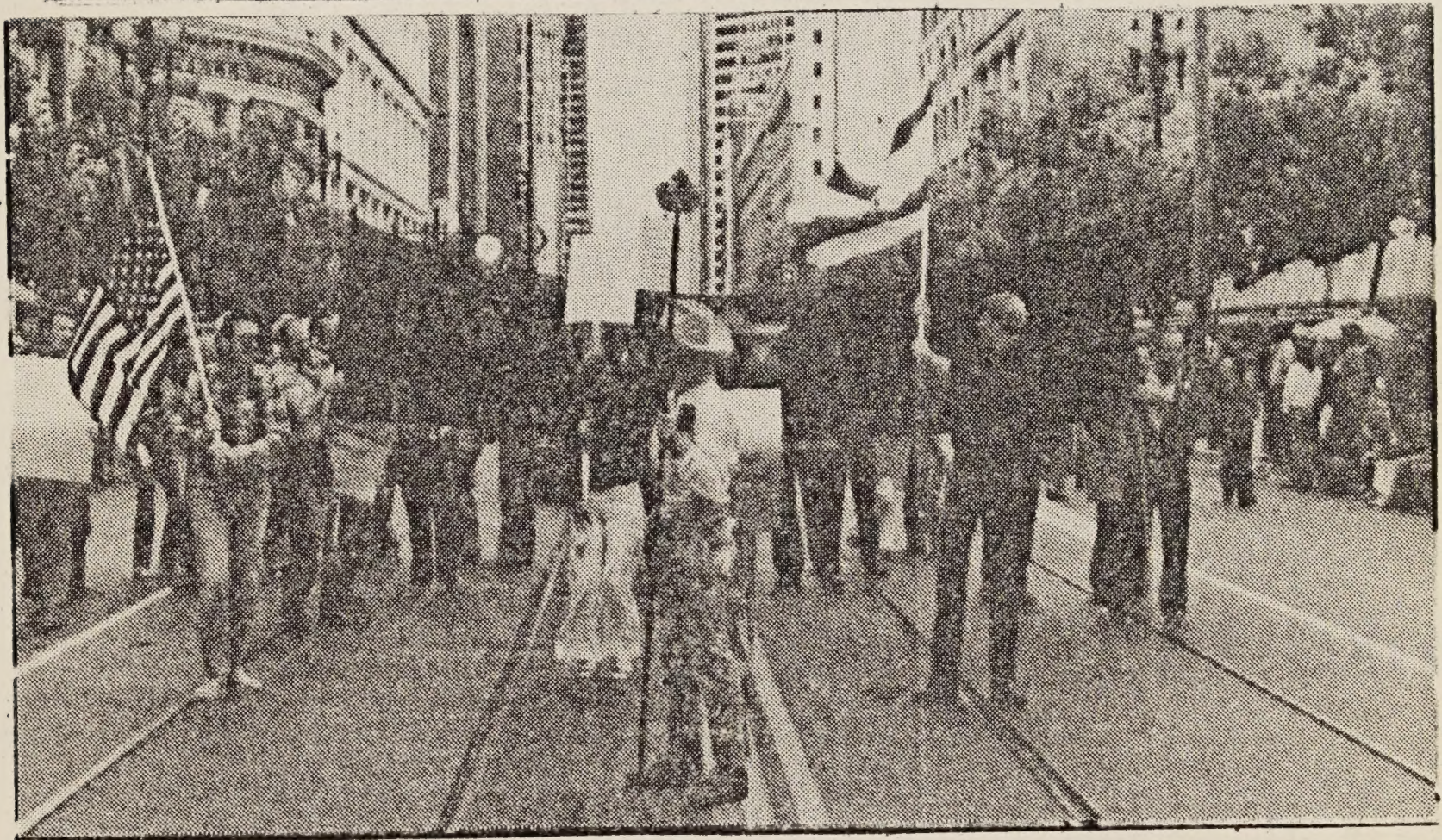


Daniel Chesir and Rabbi Allen Bennett



l. to r. Steven Fritsch Pudser, Mike Zimmerman, Ron Lezell, Sam Thal, Ellis Jacobs, Tom Rothgiesser, Bernard Pechter

The above was taken at our torah re-dedication ceremony.



NOTICE

We have received several inquiries concerning a "Havurah" group calling itself Beth Emanuel.

For your information, this is a group similar to Jews for Jesus. It seeks to attract Jews by hosting celebrations coinciding with Jewish holidays, while lacing the celebrations with a Christian message.

Invariably, when individuals come to these meetings, they are unaware of the true nature of this "Havurah" group and its leader, Gary D. Goldberg.

If you need further information, or wish to report an encounter, please call us at 495-9670.

Alan Rosenberg, Community Relations
Director
Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith

thanks to....

Jac Lasner for donating the book The Songs We Sing to our library. This book is available for loan to our members.

NEWS FLASH!

A new lesbian feminist group has formed in Israel, calling itself Aleph. Their address is P.O. Box 21371, Tel Aviv, Israel (Thanks Florida MTC newsletter)

treasurer's report

HAPPY NEW YEAR! Yes, it's that time again when Treasurer's celebrate the beginning of a new fiscal year. Ours is July 1. Why July 1 instead of January 1, or even Rosh Hashana, which would coincide with the membership year? As Tevye would say, "I'll tell you....I don't know."

The summer months are "traditionally" time when our recurring expenses exceed our sporadic revenues. So until dues pledges are renewed at Rosh Hashana, please make special effort to continue to contribute to your Synagogue on a regular basis.

The financial statement for the period July 1, 1978 through June 30, 1979 is available to members requesting a copy.

As you know, old accountants never die, they just lose their balance. Therefore, in an attempt to retain mine, I will be joining the Sah'ar Zahav runners for the upcoming jogs around Stow Lake. See the jogging article appearing elsewhere in this issue of the FORWARD for details.

Shalom,

Ron Lezell

donations

If you would like to donate to the congregation in honor of an event (a new residence, car, etc) or a person (a new partner, etc) or in the memory of someone, such contribution will be graciously accepted by Sha'ar Zahav. Contribution in any amount (\$2.00 minimum) will be most welcome. If you would like your contribution not acknowledged in the FORWARD, please note that on your check.

services

July 06: Daniel Chesir
July 13: Scott Klein
July 20: Rabbi Allen Bennett
Cantor David Unterman*
July 27: Daniel Chesir
Aug. 03: Rabbi Allen Bennett
Sermon: Supervisor Harry Britt*
Aug. 10: Michael Zimmerman

read this

On July 20th, Cantor David Unterman of Temple Sinai in Oakland will join us for services and will lead us in singing that night. Cantor Unterman will co-conduct with Rabbi Bennett, will also do some solo liturgical parts of the service. He will then be joining us after the oneg Shabbat to teach songs to those who are interested. Cantor Unterman was on the pulpit at Temple Emanu-El where he sang the beautiful El Molei Rahamim at the funeral of Harvey Milk. His temple in Oakland was the one where Harvey debated John Briggs just prior to the election last November. We hope that you can join us for this delightful evening with this friend of our community.

On August 3rd, Supervisor (the Reverend) Harry Britt will deliver the Shabbat sermon. Unknown until his appointment as the Supervisor from District Five is the fact that Harry is an ordained Methodist minister. When invited to preach at Sha'ar Zahav, his acceptance was conditioned on his making the sermon non-political. That condition was gratefully agreed to, and so Harry will speak to us that night. Be sure to join us then. He's a dynamite preacher!

Here's a third item for your calendar:

During the months of July and August, we will have the opportunity to see the television series Holocaust which was aired last year. We have obtained, on loan, video tapes of the series, minus the commercial advertisements, and we will be showing them on the second and fourth Fridays of July and August. So mark your calendars for the following dates: July 13th and 27th, and August 10th and 24th. These will be shown following services on those nights, and they will each be followed by discussions. On the final night, a member of our congregation who is a survivor of Auschwitz will help in the leading of the discussion.

birthdays

July 04: Beauregard
July 07: Jerry Moore
July 12: Sure Weiss
July 14: Leah Mazel
July 18: Tad Dunlap
July 22: Susan Kasdan
July 23: Nancy Meyer
July 30: Frank Martinez

onegs

July 06: Tal'or Bar-Shank
July 13: Scott Klein, in honor of his parents' visit.
July 20: Bob Schubring & Jay Johnson
July 27: Frank Martinez & Robert Smith, in honor of
their 8 years together.

yahrzeits

July 04: David Canterbury
July 05: Sam Holzman
July 16: Nelly levy Meyer
July 23: Irv Auerbach

Ready for a Change?

I am looking for a roommate to share a beautiful Victorian flat. In Bernal Heights and near transportation. \$150/mo. plus 1/2 utilities. Call Mike Zimmerman 433-0565 (days); 647-6344 (weekends).

calendar of events

- July 6 Evening Services 8:00 p.m.
Torah portion, Balak, Num. 22:2-25:9.
Prophetic reading, Micah 5:6-6:8.
- July 13 Evening Services 8:00 p.m.
Torah portion, Pinhas, Num. 25:10-30:1.
Prophetic reading, I Kings 18:46-19:21.
- July 20 Evening Services 8:00 p.m.
Torah portion, Mattot - Masei, Num. 30:2-36:13
Prophetic reading, Jeremiah 2:4-28; 3:4.
- July 27 Evening Services 8:00 p.m.
Shabbat Hazon. Torah portion, Devarim, Deut. 1:1
Prophetic Reading, Isaiah 1:1-27.
- August 3 Evening Services 8:00 p.m.
Shabbat Nahamu. Torah portion, Va-Ethanan,
Deut. 3:23-7:11. Prophetic reading, Isaiah 40:1-26.
- August 10 Evening Services 8:00 p.m.
Torah portion, Ekev, Deut. 7:12-11:25.
Prophetic reading, Isaiah 49:14-51:3.

All Services held at the Jewish Community Center, 3200 California Street at Presido.

SHA'AR ZAHAV

THE CONGREGATION OF THE GOLDEN GATE

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Reaching out to the Gay Community of the San Francisco Bay Area